UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

E

Distr. LIMITED
E/ECA/LDCs.4/5
30 December 1983
Original: English

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Third Meeting of the Inter-governmental Committee of Experts of African Least Developed Countries

Conakry, 11-13 April 1984

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Fourth Meeting of the Conference of Ministers of African least Developed countri

Conakry, 24-25 April 1984

LE/NAIROBI

REVIEW OF ECA ACTIVITIES IN 1983 AND PROGRAMME OF WORK IN 1984 FOR THE AFRICAN LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

A. INTRODUCTION

1. Within the framework of ECA Conference of Minister's Resolution 397(XV) and 456(XVII), the secretariat had developed a comprehensive programme of work for the biennium 1982-1983 and 1984-1985 for the African least developed countries in order to assist those member States of the Commission, through technical assistance and advisory services, studies and research at the country and regional levels, for the Implementation of the Substantial New Programme of Action (SNPA). These programmes were examined and approved by the Third Meeting of the Conference of Ministers of African LDCs and subsequently endorsed by the Eighteenth Session of the Commission and Ninth Meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers, in April, 1983.

2. The main features of the programme are:

(i) Technical assistance and advisory services to African LDCs in planning, programming and project preparation in collaboration with the substantive Divisions of the ECA and/or organizations of the United Nations System. Although this is a regular activity of the secretariat, yet such assistance can only be provided upon the request of the governments of the African LDCs.

(ii) Review of economic and social conditions in African LDCs
This is an annual regional and country review of the macro-economic trends and management of the economies of African LDCs with particular emphasis on major problems encountered and policies pursued by the governments.

(iii) Follow-up and monitoring of the implementation of the Substantial New Programme of Action. In accordance with para 121-122 of the SNPA, the secretariat undertakes, on an annual basis, an analysis of the progress achieved, the problems and prospects in the context of chapters I and II of the programme with special attention to International Resource flows to the African LDCs as a result of review meetings for the Implementation of the SNPA.

(iv) Indepth studies on the economies of African LDCs. This aspect of the programme constitutes country case studies and regional study projects on priority areas identified by the governments

individually or as a group and/or by the secretariat, within the framework of decisions and recommendations of the organs of the Commission responsible for co-ordinating policy issues for the African LDCs;

(v) Servicing of the annual meetings of the Inter-governmental Committee of Experts and Conference of Ministers of African LDCs. These annual meetings have been institutionalized by the authority of ECA Conference of Ministers' Resolution 397(XV) and it is a regular activity of the secretariat to organize and service them as a forum of exchange of views and experiences on critical issues of relevance to the African LDCs and appropriate policy guidelines are designed to be adopted by the countries individually and/or as a group.

3. In addition to the above programme elements, the substantive Divisions of the ECA, on the basis of their respective programmes and under the umbrella of the ECA inter-divisional committee on LDCs, undertake sectoral activities (e.g. industry, transport and communications, etc.) either as regional project studies or country specific studies generally upon the request of the governments of the LDCs.

B. ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT IN 1983

I. Studies and research

(a) Review of economic and social conditions in African LDCs (1981/1983)

4. As part of its regular programme activity, the ECA secretariat undertook a review of economic and social conditions in the African least developed countries covering the period, 1981-1983. The main objective of the study was to review the prevailing economic and social conditions and a selected range of policies undertaken by the African LDCs, and to have an overall assessment of the performance of these countries as a whole with emphasis on the main achievements, shortcoming and difficulties that they experienced. The findings of the survey has been submitted to this meeting in Document E/ECA/LDCs.4/2.

(b) Pricing policies in African LDCs

5. In 1983, the ECA secretariat, in collaboration with UNCTAD, undertook

studies on pricing policies in Burundi, Central African Republic, Comoros, Ethiopia, Guinea Bissau, Mali, and Rwanda.

6. The main objectives of the project is to enhance the capability of the African least developed countries in implementing the recommendations on domestic measures contained in Chapter 1 of Substantial New Programme of Action. Specifically, the study dealt with measures to:

- improve incentive schemes for upgrading productivity and increase output in the agricultural sector;
- ensure better investment resource allocation in the context of development objectives and strategies;
- improve the external and domestic terms of trade;
- reinforce the institutional and legal framework for price policies;
- improve price formation techniques and to strengthen institutional capabilities for efficient price control and monitoring.

Some salient issues have been extracted from the country case studies and presented to this meeting in Conference document E/ECA/LDCs.4/4.

(c) Progress report in the implementation of the SNPA in African LDCs (1982/1983)

7. In accordance with para. 121-122 of the SNPA, the ECA secretariat is required to prepare an analysis of the progress and policy issues affecting the implementation of the Substantial New Programme of Action (SNPA) in African least developed countries. Accordingly, the secretariat had prepared an updated progress report covering the period, 1981/83 with particular emphasis on a brief ex-post assessment of the results of the country Round Table Meetings so far organized and a review of the meetings which are at a preparatory stage; an analysis of the international support mechanisms and measures in favour of the African LDCs since the 1981 Paris Conference especially in terms of volume, and conditionalities of concessional and non-concessional aid; and a birds-eye view of the outcome of the Sixth Session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) as it relates to Implementation of the SNPA in African LDCs. The progress report has been submitted to this meeting as Conference document E/ECA/LDCs.4/3.

(d) Mid-terms review of the Third International Development Strategy (IDS)

8. In accordance with the requirements of Section D para. 81 of the International Development Strategy (IDS) of the Third United Nations Development Decade and in the context of Section C Part 5 on special measures in favour of the least developed among the developing countries, the ECA secretariat had prepared and submitted a contribution to the mid-term review of the IDS with respect to the prevailing economic and social conditions obtaining in the African least developed countries. The submission which was made from a Regional Standpoint, dealt with a brief analysis of the key macro-economic indicators and the management of the economies of the African LDCs and an assessment of the progress and prospects on the implementation of the SNPA at the national and regional levels in the African region.

II. Conferences

(a) Third meeting of the Conference of Ministers of African LDCs

9. The ECA secretariat organized and serviced the second meeting of the intergovernmental committee of experts preparatory to the third meeting of the Conference of Ministers of African least developed countries, which were held in Addis Ababa from 11-13 April and 25-26 April. 1983 respectively. The main objective of the Third Meeting of the Conference of Ministers of African LDCs was to consider the report, recommendations and draft resolutions prepared by the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts of African LDCs which had met to: (i) review the economic and social conditions, major problems encountered and policies pursued by the LDCs during 1981/82; (ii) examine progress achieved in the implementation of the SNPA with emphasis on the outcome of country Round Tables/ Consultative meetings; trends and prospects in International Resource Flow and Aid Modalities; (iii) consider measures for the effective mobilization of domestic resources in African LDCs and (iv) review the activities of the secretariat in 1982 and those planned for 1983 and to make appropriate recommendations for the approval of the 1984-1985 programme of work in favour of the African LDCs.

10. After an exhaustive debate on the report of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts, the Conference took the following decisions:

(a) that in view of the dissimilarities of the socio-economic characteristics and the difference in problems faced by the African LDCs, the ECA should continue to undertake annual surveys of these economies in order to throw light on the special circumstances prevailing in individual countries;

(b) those African LDCs who had organized country Round Table/Consultative Meetings should prepare an ex-post analysis of the outcome of the meetings in order to ascertain resource availability. In this respect, the Ministers further requested the ECA, in collaboration with the lead agencies, to assist in the establishment of national follow-up mechanism to review meetings as well as to carry out studies on the flow of external resources to their respective countries;

(c) an appeal was made to the 38th session of the General Assembly, through UNCTAD VI, to allow those African LDCs who had not organized their review meetings to do so in 1984 contrary to the deadline established by para 114 of the SNPA;

(d) that the ECA secretariat in collaboration with the lead agencies, should assist the African LDCs, to carry out country case studies on measures for the effective mobilization and efficient utilization of domestic resources for development financing.

11. The African LDCs Ministers also adopted resolutions which were subsequently endorsed by the Ninth Meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers, (Addis Ababa, April, 1983): Resolution 481(XVIII) on measures for accelerating the implementation of the SNPA in African LDCs and Resolution 482(XVIII) on the First Round of Review Meetings.

(b) UNCTAD VI

12. The ECA secretariat participated in UNCTAD VI which was held in Belgrade (Yugoslavia) from 6 June to 3 July 1983. The Conference had before it Agenda Item 12: Progress on the Implementation of the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980's for the least developed countries. The main areas of concern to the LDCs during the negotiations centered around:

(i) official development assistance (ODA) to the LDCs;
(ii) ODA debt, and
(iii) liberalization of the IMF compensatory financing facility with special consideration for the LDCs. For an assessment of the outcome of the negotiations on these and other relevant issues, Document E/ECA/LDCs.4/3 on progress on the implementation of the SNPA in African LDCs, was prepared and is presented to the conference.

III. Pre-review and review meetings

(i) Pre-review meetings

13. The secretariat attended two pre-review meetings in Geneva (Switzerland) which were organized by the UNDP for the governments of Guinea in July, 1983 and Comoros, in August, 1983. The main pre-occupation of these meetings were to review the documentations which had been prepared for the country Round Table meetings with a view to enriching the quality of the papers in terms of substance and relative consistency with the countries' development objectives and strategies and also to satisfy the requirements of donors so that they could make firm commitments of resources for the implementation of the projects and programmes of these countries.

(ii) Review meetings

14. The secretariat also attended three country Round Table meetings which were organized with the assistance of the UNDP for the governments of Benin (Cotonou, March 1983), Djibouti (Djibouti, November, 1983) and Liberia (Berne, Switzerland, October, 1983). The secretariat's assessment of the results of these meetings can be found in Conference document E/ECA/LDCs.6/4/3. However, what is worth mentioning here is that, although the eligibility of Liberia for inclusion on the official list of LDCs was not recommended by the 19th session of the United Nations Committee on Development Planning (CDP) in April 1983, yet the secretariat had attended the Liberia Round Table meeting on the basis of United Nations General Assembly Resolutions 37/194 and 36/207 and upon the invitation of the Head of State of Liberia who specifically requested for ECA assistance in helping to make the Conference a success.

(IV) Other meetings

(a) UN Committee on Development Planning

15. The EC.. participated in the 19th session of the UN Committee on Development Planning which was held in New York in April, 1983. The Committee considered, among others, measures in favour of the least developed and other low income countries and the eligibility of Liberia to be included on the list of LDCs. With respect to the former, the Committee called for an enlargement of the IMF compensatory financing facility and improvement in its coverage; more programme loans by the world bank; increased bilaterial aid and increased flexibility in conditionalities for short-term balance of payments support in favour of the least developed countries, etc.

16. As for the case of Liberia, the Committee did not recommend its eligibility on the basis of the existing criteria for the identification of LDCs and in the light of the data presented.

17. The Committee had adjusted the average GDP per capita criterion to the level of US$285 for the period 1977-1979 with lower and upper cut-off points of US$323 and US$387. According to the indicators for Liberia supplied by the UN Statistical Office, the World Bank and the government of Liberia, the average per capita GDP at current market prices for the period 1978-80 are $486, $578 and $459, respectively. The average percentage share of manufacturing in GDP at current factor cost were 9.8, 6.8 and 9.0 respectively. The literacy rates given by the World Bank and the government of Liberia were 25 and 15 per cent of literate population 15 years of age and above, respectively. It was on the basis of these figures that the Committee did not recommend the inclusion of Liberia on the list of LDCs.

(b) UN inter-agency consultations on follow-up of the SNPA

18. The United Nations Inter-agency Consultations on Follow-up of the SNPA are regular meetings of the organizations of the United Nations System, usually convened by the Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation in accordance with General

Assembly Resolution 38/114 and decision 1991/15 of the UN Administrative Co-ordination Committee (ACC). The main purpose of the consultations is to exchange views on major aspects of the Agencies' programmes of work in favour of the LDCs and actions taken by individual organizations in the implementation of the SNPA. The ECA, as a member of the group, attended the recent meeting held in Geneva (Switzerland) at which time the secretariat submitted a brief report on its activities and on the progress in the Implementation of the SNPA in African LDCs.

(V) Follow-up action on ECA resolutions 481(XVIII) and 482(XVIII)

19. As part of its decisions during its Third Meeting, the Conference of Ministers of African LDCs (Addis Ababa, April 1983) adopted Resolutions 481(XVIII) on measures for accelerating the implementation of the SNPA in African LDCs and 482(XVIII) on the First Round of Review Meetings, which were subsequently endorsed by the Eighteenth Session of the Commission and Ninth Meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers (Addis Ababa, April 1983). The below constitutes follow-up actions taken by the ECA secretariat in fulfilment of the mandate of the Conference of Ministers of African LDCs.

(a) Resolution 481(XVIII)

20. In accordance with paragraph 7 of Resolution 481(XVIII), the Ministers requested the ECA, in collaboration with the lead agencies, to assist the African LDCs (a) in undertaking, upon request of governments, studies aimed at enabling the African LDCs to mobilize domestic resources for development and (b) in establishing national follow-up mechanisms to the review meetings and monitoring of the implementation of the SNPA.

21. With respect to the studies on measures for domestic resource mobilization, the secretariat had prepared a project document for Bilaterial Technical Co-operation arrangements entitled: "Country studies on measures for the effective mobilization and utilization of Domestic Resources for development financing in African least developed countries," which will be submitted by ECA's Technical Assistance Co-ordination and Operations Office (TACOO) to interested donors

for financing. The immediate objectives of the project studies will be (i) to identify the problems associated with, and all possible sources of domestic resources, in order to enable these countries to devise appropriate measures for mobilizing those resources and to plan and draw up investment programmes based on a concrete internal resource bench mark and (ii) to examine the flow of external resources to the African LDCs.

22. On the establishment of national follow-up mechanisms, the secretariat had forwarded the report of the Third meeting of the Conference of Ministers of African LDCs along with the Resolutions to the UNDP and the World Bank which had been followed up by consultations on the best possible approaches in setting up an appropriate machinery at the country level for the follow-up of the review meetings. In order to concretize the consultations, the ECA secretariat expects the African LDCs to submit official requests for the establishment of their respective national follow-up mechanisms. In that respect, a letter was sent to African LDCs who had organized review meetings with a view to informing them of the availability of the Secretariat to assist.

(b) Resolution 482(XVIII)

23. As per paragraph 9 of Resolution 482(XVIII), the ECA Executive Secretary submitted to the Plenary of UNCTAD VI, the proposal of the Third Meeting of the Conference of Ministers of African LDCs, to extend the deadline for convening the review meetings beyond 1983. The proposal was endorsed by UNCTAD VI and recommended to the 38th Session of the General Assembly to allow those African LDCs, who had not done so, to organize their country review meetings in 1984 without prejudice to the global mid-term review in 1985.

(c) Technical assistance and advisory services (1982-1983)

(i) Assistance in planning and programming

24. A Joint ECA/ADB Technical Assistance was provided to the Ministry of Economy and Commerce of Rwanda to establish a short-term forecasting model on the basis of a social accounting matrix (SAM). The preliminary

framework for the SAM was agreed upon and some of the cells had been completed. A forecasting model (MODELS UMUGANDA) was developed, tested and installed in Rwanda, on the basis of a partial SAM and the full implementation of the forecasting system will be attained upon the completion of the Survey of Economic Sectors by the officials of Rwanda.

25. Upon the request of the government of Guinea, the ECA secretariat assisted the staff of the Planning Department in preparing projections of Economic aggregates and resource requirements for the country's development plan and public investment programmes and projects for Guinea's Round Table meeting with donors to be organized in 1984.

26. As a follow-up to the Joint Communique issued by the government of Camoros and the ECA at the end of the Executive Secretary's official visit to Moroni from 4 to 7 May 1983, the secretariat assisted Comoros in the following areas during 1983:

(a) assistance in the preparation of the basic documentation for the country's Round Table planned for March 1984; which consisted of a report on Comoros's overall and sectoral development objectives and strategies, major constraints and potentialities; and a detailed investment programme along with estimated resource requirements for its implementation;

(b) assistance to women organization in Comoros;

(c) assistance in the organization of tourism activities in Comoros;

(d) assistance in air transport;

(e) assistance in the framework of the preferencial trade areas and

(f) assistance in area of remote sensing.

(ii) Ad-hoc assistance

27. Acting upon the request of the Institute du Sahel which was made to ECA on behalf of the Countries of CILSS (Comite inter-Etats de Lutte Contre la Secheresse dans le Sahel: Drought Committee on Sahel States), the

secretariat undertook a review of economic and social conditions (1973-1983) and a perspective study (1983-1998) of the Sahelian Countries (Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Upper Volta, Chad, Niger, the Gambia and Cape Verde) with particular emphasis on the agricultural sector, especially the food production capabilities and supply situation; transport and energy sectors. The aim of the project study is to provide a tool for promoting co-operation among the CILSS countries in combatting desertification, improving transport network especially of the landlock members and the joint exploitation of their natural resources and energy of the region.

(iii) ECA sectoral technical assistance

28. Below is a selected range of sectoral technical assistance provided by some substantive divisions of the ECA to the African LDCs, in the framework of their respective programmes:

29. The Division of Public Administration, Management and Manpower (PAMMD) of ECA, conducted national workshops for Botswana, Lesotho and the Gambia with emphasis on employment and productivity planning.

30. Upon the request of the respective LDCs governments, the ECA Statistics Division provided assistance to Lesotho, Tanzania, and the Gambia for the improvement of their respective national accounting systems. Ethiopia, Sudan, Gambia, Burundi, Malawi, Togo, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Botswana, Benin, Djibouti, Mali, Niger, and Upper Volta, were also assisted in the areas of Census and Demographic Survey and Civil Registration.

31. In the field of population studies, assistance has been provided to:

Botswana - (i) Evaluation and analysis of the 1981 census data and
(ii) Population Projections

Sudan - Finalization of the 1983 census questionnaire, enumeration manuals, tabulation plans and an analytical framework for processing the census data.

Somalia - Reviewing the evaluation and analysis of the 1975 population census and finalization of the tables for publication.

Lesotho - Finalization of the report on the labour force and migration survey

- Conducted a national seminar on population and development

Tanzania - Evaluation and analysis of the 1978 census and an appraisal of the Pilot Civil Registration Scheme

- Organization of the Mid-Level training in demography

- Population projections

Djibouti - Analysis of the population census data

Burundi and Rwanda - Population analysis and policy formation

Mali - Finalization of the technical report on evaluation and analysis of the 1976 census.

Comoros - Population census analysis.

32. In addition to the above, technical assistance is being provided to all member States by the ECA/UNIDO Industry Division in the framework of the Industrial Development Decade for Africa. The Transport, Communications and Tourism Division is also assisting all African countries to mobilize resources for the implementation of national, subregional and regional projects under the approved programme of the Transport and Communications Decade for Africa, 1978-1988.

C. ACTIVITIES TO BE CARRIED OUT IN 1984

(i) Studies and Research

33. The studies and research activities to be undertaken in 1984 will include:

(a) Survey of Economic and Social Conditions in African LDCs (1982-83). This will entail a review of macro-economic trends, the effectiveness of domestic policies and the impact of external factors in the management of the economies of African LDCs.

(b) Study on industrial capacity utilization in African LDCs. The principal objectives are: to evaluate the status of industrial development and the extent to which installed capacities of manufacturing establishments are being utilized; to identify problems associated with capacity utilization and to make appropriate recommendations compatible with domestic policies for industrial development in African LDCs.

(c) Progress in the implementation of the SNPA in African LDCs (1981-1984) In accordance with paragraph 118 of the SNPA, a global mid-term review of progress towards the implementation of the Substantial New Programme of Action should be undertaken in 1985. The secretariat will carry out an assessment of the progress achieved during the period 1981-1984 (i.e. since the adoption of the SNPA in September 1981), with particular emphasis on actions taken at the country level to implement Chapter I of the SNPA; review progress in international support measures, particularly the flow of concessional and non-concessional official development assistance (ODA) to the African LDCs; the impact of the country round table consultative meetings in terms of donor assistance obtained as a result of organizing these meetings, and measures for the successful implementation of the SNPA during the second half of the 1980's.

(ii) Country review meetings

34 The secretariat attended the country Round Table conferences with donors organized by the governments of Burundi, Comoros and Malawi during the first quarter of 1984. The assessment of the country Round Tables in document E/ECA/LDCs.4/3 partially covers these countries since the meetings have just recently been held prior to this Conference and their results could not be assessed.

35. According to the tentative schedule for the remaining country Round Table consultative meetings agreed upon by the high level Ministerial Consultations in Addis Ababa, April 1983, a bulk of the review

meetings are scheduled to be held in 1984. The secretariat, in addition to its attendance at these meetings, is prepared to assist in the preparation of the necessary documentations for the Round Tables. However, those countries who have not yet organized their review meeting should submit to the ECA an official request for such assistance as has been done in the case of the governments of Comoros and Guinea.

Other meetings

36. The secretariat plans to attend meetings that will be organized by the organizations of the United Nations System which are related to the implementation of the Substantial New Programme of Action (SNPA) in African LDCs. Specifically, the inter-agency consultation on follow-up of the SNPA to be organized by the Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation; meeting of multilateral and bilateral financing and technical assistance institution with LDCs to be organized by UNCTAD; the twentieth session of the United Nations Committee for Development Planning (CDP), etc.

37. The technical assistance component of the ECA special programme of work for the African LDCs will be continued in 1984 and the substantive divisions will give top priority to programmes and projects that are specifically geared towards the LDCs. In particular, assistance will be provided, upon the request of the governments, in the preparation and organization of country review meetings. Governments are also urged to inform the secretariat of their respective needs for technical assistance in the areas of planning and programming and other project areas which have been identified in the key priority sectors.